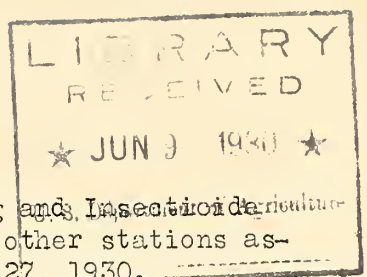


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THE FOOD LAW IN KITCHEN LANGUAGE



A radio talk by Mr. A. T. Retzlaff, Food, Drug and Insecticide Administration, delivered through Station WRC and 35 other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, May 27, 1930.

Not long ago the Food and Drug Administration issued a warning to the housewives of this country to keep poisons off the pantry shelf. The warning was published in several thousand newspapers. Many of you read it. We sent it out after an arsenic insecticide accidentally got in the flour in a housewife's kitchen. The illness or death of a number of people was narrowly averted through quick work by a Federal food inspector.

Federal food officials have investigated many food poison cases. The majority have been traced right to a home or public kitchen.

Are you interested in knowing how to prevent food poisoning in your own kitchen? Then, write to the Food and Drug Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., and ask for our booklet entitled "Food Poisons and the Law." It contains many things every housewife should know. It is absolutely free -- a part of our work in putting the food law in kitchen language.

And while I am talking of booklets, I may as well mention another which you should have. It isn't about food but about drug preparations which many use daily. The name of the booklet is "Antiseptics and the Law." It puts you wise to what an antiseptic really is and how to recognize one by the label. The popularity of this booklet is evident from the fact that we have given away the first 2000 copies and have had more printed already. Order your copy today.

You would be surprised at the skill of the scientists in our food laboratories. They can take a bottle of tomato catsup and with the aid of the microscope determine in a few minutes what kind of tomatoes were used in the making. If a rotten tomato was allowed to go into the product they can detect it. Only a few weeks ago the Government won a case at Cleveland involving \$2500 worth of tomato sauce which was made of over-ripe and rotten tomatoes. The manufacturer couldn't argue with the microscope. He is now installing up-to-date machinery in his factory and he will employ skilled labor so he can put out a product which complies with the law.

The majority of the citizens of the United States are law abiding. So it is with the food manufacturer and dealer -- the majority are law abiding. The laws were made to curb the unsavory work of rogues so lacking in honor they will even tamper with the nation's food supply. That these rogues are clever cannot be denied. At times they have the food scientists baffled -- but not for very long. For the scientists too are clever men.

Some years ago Government chemists analyzed samples of ground pepper which ran high in content of worthless pepper shells. From examination of the finished product they were unable to tell whether pepper shells had been added in violation of the law or whether the whole pepper before grinding naturally was high in shell impossible to remove. An inspector was detailed to investigate the factory. He found that bags of pepper shells were being

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bought by the manufacturer. Food officials were positively sure that here was a case of adulteration. Yet they had insufficient evidence with which to persuade a jury should the case be taken to court. Pepper shells have no value as a spice or as anything else. The food officials decided that here they had an unusual case which demanded unusual methods. So the same inspector was sent back to watch for the next shipment of pepper shells to this company. He found some at a railway terminal and injected a harmless chemical into the bags. This was done without the knowledge of the manufacturer who received the shells. Then every shipment of ground pepper from this factory was tested for the chemical by Government chemists. In a short time they were rewarded. The chemical was found in the ground pepper manufactured by this firm. It was in such minute quantity that it required delicate chemical tests to detect it but it proved adulteration by the use of those pepper shells. The shipments were seized and the law violator hauled into court. The verdict of course was in favor of the Government.

Although food officials are constantly on the alert they have found few cases of spice adulteration since that. This manufacturer made money illegally in selling pepper shells for pepper prices. But he paid dearly through litigation and through loss of business. He learned at his own cost that crime does not pay.

I am with the Food and Drug Administration at Washington, not as a chemist, nor a bacteriologist, nor an inspector, but as a writer to report to you regularly through the newspapers the work of the Federal food officials. Such stories as I have just told you, and many others, have appeared in the newspapers. From these few illustrations you can see that the work of the food chemists and microbe hunters is not tedious. Far from it. Some of their experiences are as gripping as detective stories.

When we tell you through the papers that we have a new booklet free to you for the asking, we immediately get many requests, which proves that you are reading our newspaper articles. Our clipping service and our field men send us clippings of our articles from the newspapers to show us how widely they are circulated. Not long ago when we told you that neither drugs nor drug preparations added to chicken feed could possibly increase egg production we received clippings from nearly every State in the Union and even from one newspaper in England.

All of the 100 million or more people in the United States are interested in food. They ought to be. Most of them sit down to the table three times a day to consume it. They should be and, I am quite sure, are interested in their Pure Food Law. The thousands of letters reaching us yearly from housewives who desire information convince us that a part of our work is to keep the public informed.

Every Tuesday you may hear our veteran inspector from any one of a hundred radio stations talking on pure foods and drugs. From New York also on Tuesday over a network through the East you may hear W. R. M. Wharton, one of the Federal food officials, giving radio information on how intelligently to read the label. Our booklet on Radio Programs tells you when and where to listen in in order to hear these men.

Speaking of reading the label reminds me that I had a good lesson just a few days ago. In a grocery here in Washington I asked for, among other things, three cans of whole figs. I had too much faith in the clerk and did not look at the label - that is, not until I got home. Then I saw that he had given me canned fig pieces. The label stated it plainly. Now I couldn't blame that on the law. It would be unreasonable for me to say that canned fig pieces should not be allowed on the market for, after all, they are a wholesome food. It was my fault because I didn't read the label.

No housewife after asking for a bottle of vanilla will let the clerk hand her a can of beans. But how many housewives look at the label on the bottle to see that they have been sold vanilla extract and not an imitation? Of course the imitation may be pure and wholesome but we believe that the housewife should insist on getting exactly what she calls for.

We are doing our best to see that the foods and drugs you buy are pure and properly labeled. Do you want to help make the law more effective for you? Then listen to our radio talks, read our newspaper articles, and write for our free booklets in which we tell about the Federal food law as it applies to your kitchen, to your pocketbook, and, most important of all, to your health.

